

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PEPR, IS, JO, EG
SUBJ: EGYPTIAN-PALESTINIAN RELATIONS--VIEW OF NABLUS ACTING
MAYOR

SUMMARY: NABLUS INHABITANTS ARE TROUBLED BY DETERIORATION IN
EGYPTIAN-PALESTINIAN RELATIONS, ESPECIALLY AS THIS MAY AFFECT
STATUS OF SEVERAL THOUSAND STUDENTS THERE. STILL, THERE IS
A FUNDAMENTAL CONFIDENCE IN SADAT AND HOPE FOR THE PEACE PROCESS.
END SUMMARY.

2. NABLUS' DEPUTY MAYOR ZAFAR AL MASRI (ACTING MAYOR FOR ALMOST
THREE MONTHS IN BASSAM SHAKA'S ABSENCE) MARCH 2 EXPRESSED
CONCERN TO POLOFF FOLLOWING REPORTS FROM CAIRO ON
DETERIORATION IN PALESTINIAN-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS.

3. SEVERAL THOUSAND NABLUSIS ARE NOW STUDYING IN CAIRO,
AL MASRI SAID, SO PERHAPS HALF OF THE CITY HAS EITHER RELATIVES
OR FRIENDS WHO COULD BE AFFECTED BY CANCELLATION OF THEIR
PRIVILEGES. STUDENTS, MORE THAN BUSINESSMEN, STOOD TO LOSE,
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HE SAID.

4. AL MASRI SAID HE CERTAINLY DISAPPROVED OF THE ASSASSINATION
OF SIBAI, BUT WAS UNCONVINCED THAT THE PLO WAS LINKED TO IT.
ANYWAY, SADAT'S MEASURES MEANT A COLLECTIVE PUNISHMENT AT
VARIANCE WITH EGYPT'S TRADITIONAL SUPPORT FOR THE PALESTINIANS.

5. AL MASRI FAULTED THE PLO (IN CONFIDENCE) AND THE ARAB STATES WHICH HAVE REJECTED SADAT'S INITIATIVE. BOTH SADAT'S STATED GOALS IN HIS KNESSET SPEECH AND NEGOTIATING POSITIONS PRESERVE PALESTINIAN AND ARAB RIGHTS, SO HE SHOULD NOT BE OSTRACIZED FOR TACTICAL DIFFERENCES, AL MASRI BELIEVED.

6. AL MASRI DID NOT CRITICIZE AMERICA'S ROLE IN THE PEACE PROCESS. HE ACKNOWLEDGED US EFFORTS ON BEHALF OF THE PALESTINIANS, BUT NOTED PESSIMISTICALLY BEGIN'S ADAMANT REFUSAL TO APPLY THE WITHDRAWAL CLAUSE OF 242 TO THE WEST BANK.

7. COMMENT: ZAFAR AL MASRI IS YOUNGER BROTHER OF HIKMAT AL MASRI, CLOSE FRIEND AND SUPPORTER OF SADAT. HIS VIEWS REFLECT A SIGNIFICANT ALBEIT WANING, PROPORTION OF WEST BANKERS WHO HAVE ADOPTED A PRAGMATIC, WAIT-AND-SEE POSITION RE SADAT'S INITIATIVE.

8. EAST JERUSALEM PAPER, "AL FAJR", MARCH 3 REPORTS THAT 120 PALESTINIAN STUDENTS FROM WEST BANK AND GAZA HAVE BEEN EXPELLED FROM EGYPT. REPORT ADDS THAT STUDENTS HAD BEEN HELD UNDER DETENTION FOR WEEK BEFORE EXPULSION. IN ADDITION, 90 MORE WEST BANK/GAZA STUDENTS AND WORKERS ARE REPORTEDLY STILL UNDER DETENTION IN EGYPT.

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